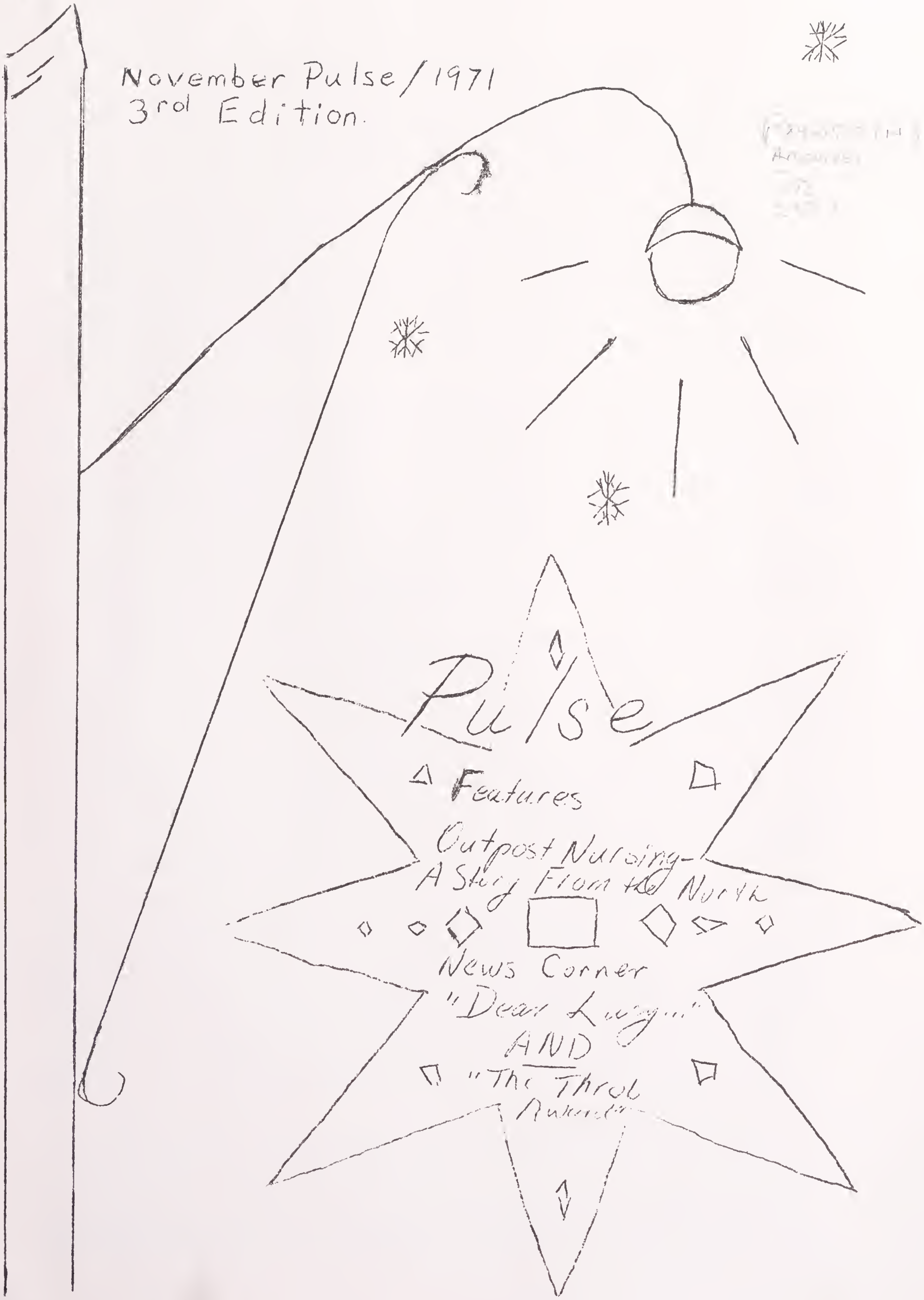
November Pulse / 1971
3rd Edition.



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# OUTPOST NURSING IN THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES

Editor's Note: This aticlt was written by Gail Morris, PBII. She was stationed in Cape Dorset, NWT, for two months this summer. She tells a remarkable story--hope you all enjoy it.

"I heard about the opportunity to work in the regions of Northern Alberta through a letter which was brought to class about the end of March. The letter enquired as to whether students (Basic or Post-Basic) were interested in summer employment in the north. I wrote to the person involved in Edmonton, Alberta, stating that I was interested and three to four weeks later, I was informed that I had been accepted for outpost work. Transportation and living costs were all provided by the Government.

I was stationed at Cape Dorset, which is an Eskimo settlement situated approximately 250 miles south-west of Frobisher Bay in the North-West Territories. This "town" is the oldest and largest settlement on Baffin Island (as I was told) and had a population of 700 people-- 600 Eskimo and 50 non-Eskimo. The settlement was divided into two parts--the settlement proper, where the nursing station was, and the village. There were only two stores--the Hudson Bay Company and the Eskimo West-Baffin Island Co-op store. There was also an art shop where Eskimos did print work (Cape Dorset is famous for its prints) , a radio shack, and two RCMP families. There was quite a large modern school for elementary students in the settlement; however; high-school age children attended a a big new high school in Frobisher Bay.

There were no roads to speak of--only about three miles of dirt track (in summer) and ski-doos and Bombardiers in winter. Really, the only means of transportation was by plane--Nordair flies to Cape Dorset from Montreal; but by far the most used transportation was via the Twin Otters, Sky Vans and DC-3's, which flew in three times a week. These planes were used for medical evacuations (for which they especially were ordered in), butcould be used for inter-settelement journeys of other natures.

T There were three nurses in the nursing station -a big building with our living quarters at one end and the clinic room, office and patient's room at the other end. A TB worker (Eskimo), an interpreter (also Eskimo), a maid and a janitor also made up our staff.

We did every type of nursing imagineable (and doctoring too, as the nearest doctor and hospital were in Frobisher Bay). We had general clinics, TB clinics, ante-natal, post-natal and well baby clinic, so you always had a variety. One of us was oncall every night and every weekend and it wasn't unusual to be dragged out of bed during the night. We obviously did alot of active treatment and it was up to us to diagnose the problem and treat it. We acted as doctors, nurses, dentist (we pulled teeth), took X-rays (actually our janitor - an Eskimo, was quite good at X-ray work and tooth pulling. We had to be quite good at secretarial work, working the radio and it helped to be able to drive the truck and know a few basic mechanics. U

We did our own deliveries except for first pregnancies and anyone having over sic children. These people and anyone with complications (which we had to diagnose) were also evacuated.

We needed to know quite a lot about drugs as we did all the prescribing and we also did suturing. On the odd occasion you are required to do some procedures which are definitely not nursing responsibilities. In these cases the doctors radio instructions as to what they wanted us to do.

For example, we had a patient present with a pneumothorax and we were told to do a pleural puncture to get the air out. We had to improvise a lot of our equipment: sterilize by boiling, start our own IV therapies and know how to cook because there was no diet kitchen and if we had in-patients we had to cook their meals too as well as our own.

We were also permitted to teach and carry out birth control measures by using the pill or inserting IUD's. Also, we did many pelvic examinations.

The people themselves relied on us tremendously. However, it was very difficult to teach them things such as dressing their children warmly and keeping them clean. The people know how to do it and why but usually they only cleaned up their children when they brought them to us because they know we wanted clean children. Often our purposes were defeated, not because of lack of intelligence but they did not seem to care that much. Unfortunately too, many homes did not have running water, bath tubs were almost non-esistent and the housing problem was dreadful--5½ persons per bedroom Food was another problem. There were no fresh fruits or vegetables (not for us either) and there was no milk except for canned Carnation milk. Fresh milk in Frobisher Bay cost $1.25 a quart so they couldn't have afforded it even if it had been available. When the supply ships come in all fresh food is cleaned up almost immediately and that's the last until the next sea lift in summer when the ice goes out. These people did not seem to stress too much importance to their health--they know the hazards but they chose to ignore them on the whole.

The main health problem was TB. The settlement was pretty well full of it as youcan tell by the reasons listed above. Preventive medicine was more carried out by our TB programme which included a lot of chemO-therapy, regular chest X-rays, and sputum cultures. We had an Eskimo TB worker who kept an account of who was on drugs, what kind, what dose and she prepared the TB pills and also looked after collecting sputum specimens and getting people in for X-ray. TbB was a major problem and could easily utilize one full time nurse working on it alone.
Next after Tb was chronic chest disease which quite often led to pneumonia and bronchitis. VD was fairly prevalent but actually it was probably not higher than here except we heard about it and treated everyone who suspected they had VD rather than wait for reports. Alcoholism was another problem. If liquor is not available, quite a few resort to drinking shaving lotion, perfume and unfortunately methyl hydrate. Even though they knew the risks involved they would still drink it.

In spite of making it sound hectic (which it was) I don't think there is anywhere else you could work so hard and get so much satisfaction. In this situation you are doctor and nurse and everything else but you also get to see results, hopefully good ones. We did have some time to ourselves but never without the thought in the back of our minds that we didn't know what was coming next. You may get dragged out of bed at 3 a.m. but you always have the satisfaction of knowing you have done the best you can no matter what they came to you for.

I would do ti again. It is an education unto itself no matter how much past experience you have had.

You can't really learn about it until you are in it but the experience is one you will never forget. If you like a challenge, and can take being a nurse, doctor, dentist etc. all rolled into one, then that's the job to try.

I have not tried to glamorize it or make it sound as though we worked 24 hours a day but there is no where here that I know of that you can learn so much or give so much as you can in an area such as this. You get to know the people and they to know you. You do many things above and beyond the call of nursing which may not appeal to many people. You may

may be dead on your feet only to find that you have to stay up all night for a delivery but personally, I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

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# Dear Lucy...

Dear Lucy:

I thought I'd ask you how I should conduct myself when our family doctor comes to our house to check on my terrible cold. I want to make a good impression and act very professional!

Cough! Cough!
Lizzy Hotlips.

Dear Liz:

It makes some people sick just trying to get in touch with a doctor but since you've succeeded I can advise you how to conduct yourself. Just follow my own professional rules as listed below:

1) DO NOT say anything that might give him an ulcer.
2) Avoid negative statements which might keep him from thinking positively.
3) Pointing to where it hurts is all right, but do not complain or give the doctor reason to think that your problems are worse than his.
4) Let him know that you have tried various medicines prescribed by friends before bothering him.
5) To make a good impression, recite a few verses from any medical book in your library.
6) DO NOT remove clothes until told to do so.
7) If your problem stems from any segment of your electrical equilibrium (Engineers, etc.), try to get permission to arrange for bodily contact with a small conductor designed to produce hot or cold waves. This will cancel negative and positive conditions simultaneously -- and at the same time!
8) To get heat, connect your small conductor to the color TV set and aim antenna in proper direction. For cold waves, connect the other two wires to a water cooler.
9) If the doctor agrees to this plan, he can return to his golf.
10) Good luck, doubled.

Love,
Lucy.

CONFIDENTIAL TO ANNE: It's smart to have an early morning wedding. Then, if things don't work out, you will not have wasted the whole day.

CONFIDENTIAL TO LYNDA: If you can't take a vacation, why not look at slides of cancelled checks from last year's trip???

Love,
Lucy

## A PLACE FOR POETS

"A Place for Poets" was designed for all of the nursing students who can look and laugh at themselves and their profession. Contributions in the form of original poems and/or stories from any creative genius in the audience -- or even pre-thought, already-published works of art -- are very welcome.

This month, A Place for Poets investigates that most traumatic of events -- a child's first visit to the Doctor...

# FIRST VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

"Hello, little girl. What
have you got
to say? Are
you happy
that you've
come to see
me today???
Today should be something you'll
never forget; so
hold out your arm,
close your eyes,
and let everything
nice fill your curly
blonde head -- the
dawn in the meadow,
your china tea set;
the day that your
dad bought the big
red balloon, the
day that your mommy
let you help clean
the room...Is every-
thing happy? Do you
feel fine to sit???
That's good.
Now you
know
that
this
won't
hurt
a
bit
!

Fran

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NOTE: The School of Nursing Students' Council has, as of now, disowned its photocopier. Just too many people wanted to photocopy books -- which our little tabletop model just cannot do! If anyone would like to purchase the machine, it'll go for about $15.00 (that includes materials). If you need a photocopier for replication of single sheets of paper, pamphlets, etc., get in touch with the Students' Council or Fran Williams BIII.

Thanks.

## NEWS CORNER

Student Services has really been working lately! There are several notices, all of which are listed below:

1) To all those who have chocolate bars outstanding, please have the bars or the money in by Friday, November 26th.
2) Tickets for the School of Nursing Formal -- to be held in the Crystal Ball Room of the King Edward Hotel -- will be going on sale during the second week in December. Price of tickets is $5.00 per couple. Keep your eye on the large Calendar in the Lounge for further announcements! The formal's on January 21st.
3) The Christmas Party is December 16th at 4:00 in the Student Lounge. Bring your husband and/or boyfriend!!! There will be a bus provided for all those who want to go to Sunnybrook to sing to some of the patients who live there. It sounds like it's going to be a really good night -- hope you plan to attend.
4) New pay phones are being installed in the downstairs corridor of the School of Nursing. Great, eh? (!!!) This comes as an answer to all the bottlenecks around our present 'phone and Chappie's office. So, for all of you who have ever stood around our present appliance wanting to make a call, your waiting days are over!
5) MESSAGE BOARD: Please, please, please -- when you have a personal message for so come in any course of the School of Nursing, leave your note on the PERSONAL MESSAGE BOARD (near the Russell St. Entrance) and not on the other board. The 'year' boards are becoming so crowded that many of the messages -- esp[illegible] from teachers -- are being missed.
6) Please don't be afraid to use the large calendar in the School of Nursing Lounge. You are who it's there for!

From Student's Council come the following announcements:

1) Diane Johnson (PB2) is interested in having some people from the School to go to a new committee of health sciences people. Meetings are on Thursday nights and Diane tells us they're very interesting! Meetings of the committee concern, for example, arranging educational opportunities for we students at the S of N -- and they need all the help they can get!
2) Three of the Basic students from our School of Nursing were chosen to go on the Carolina Exchange Programme, which took place a week ago. They have all come back with interesting stories and, one of them, Marilyn Longo, is telling us all about it in this issue of PULSE !!!. The kids who went were Sharon Kimmer (B3), Chris Denn (B3) and Marylin Longo (B2).

From PULSE:

1) Where are my PULSE reps? Pulse needs someone who can help edit the paper and carry on the good work next year!
2) Can anyone who still wants to learn how to use the mimeograph machine leave a note on the Pulse room door with name, year + phone no. on it?
3) Would people please mimeograph BOTH SIDES OF PAPERS SVP???

## MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY

Missing Books: The number of books and journals missing from the nursing library is increasing. After several student suggestions, the School of Nursing library staff will do spot checks of briefcases etc. as people leave the library.

Missing Pages from Journals and Books: If you discover pages torn from a book or journal, please tell library staff so that replacements can be obtained for the missing pages.

Loan Periods: Undergraduate student loan periods for the School of Nursing library are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Monograph or pamphlets: | 1 week. No renewal. |
| Journals (bound or unbound) Bound journals more than 5 years old may not be borrowed by undergraduates. | 1 week. No renewal. |
| Latest Issue of Journal | Overnight loan only. |

Fines: There is a 20¢ fine per day for each overdue journal and book.

Reserve Material: Students may place material for class seminars on reserve for library use only. This material, while applicable to the seminar, cannot be taken out of the library.

A daily notice, listing names of students whose reserved books are available, will be posted at the library desk.

If you have any troubles, problems, or questions regarding the use of the library or obtaining material please ask the library staff.

Florence Doidge.

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Minister: "Do you say prayers before eating?"

Little Boy: "No sir, I don't need to. My mother's a good cook."

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## THE THROB AWARD

The 'Throb' Award is a little trophy that the Editor of this newspaper gives to those individuals or groups who have contributed most positively to the bettering of this School of Nursing, the Community, or nursing in general.

This month, the 'Throb' Award is presented to (Da Da!) Basic One for the fantastic Pot Luck dinner its members gave us all on October 25th, and for the great school spirit which this group possesses.

Thanks so much, Basic One -- keep up the good work!

Gratefully,
THE PULSE.

## THE CAROLINA EXPRESS

"Goin' to Carolina in My Mind":

The first thing I want to say is if you have a chance to go on the "Tarheel Exchange" next fall -- go! This exchange (going into its 12th year) involves 32 students from U of T and 32 students from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Sharon Rimmer BIII, Chris Denn BIII and myself, along with the others just returned form spending a week at University of North Carolina. We went to classes (they have a beautiful School of Nursing there!), pubbing (natch!), to a new Southern Baptist Church, a football game, professor's homes for dinner, talked to farmers and people from the community in their homes, went to seminars... in fact, I could list a million things we did, but it still wouldn't capture the real feeling of the exchange. The people make it. It's hard to describe the feelings and intense atmosphere when 64 very different people get together. It's fun, naturally, but it is a real sort of education -- something that you just have to experience for yourself.

One thing that really impressed us was the spirit that the Carolina U. kids had. It seemed that they were all involved in everything and still getting straight A's!!! That's a little hard to take. Then, too, the buildings and residences were straight out of "Gone with the Wind" -- one of the dormitories we visited had a large veranda with swings on the end of it, and chairs all the way down along the sides!

It was also interesting to note the Black Baptist Church. On the communion table at the front of the church was the Sacrament, but it was hidden underneath a white, hooded sheet. The pastor kept referring to the Sacrament and this sheet all the way through the service -- saying that the congregation was "not to be afraid of taking the Sacrament". It was only after the service that we realized that the hood was a symbol of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Carolina kids will be at U of T from January 6 to 10. The people that are visiting our university are those students who were our "co's" (partners from Carolina. They'll be coming to the School of Nursing sometime during this time period and if you see them (it's quite difficult to miss them with their be-a-u-tiful accent) say hi and introduce yourself.

Help us match their hospitality--which was, by the way, fantastic!

--Marilyn Longo, BII.

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## THE VARSITY NURSE

DO YOU HAVE A CAMERA? IF YOU DO, AND YOU TAKE PICTURES, WE'D APPRECIATE HAVING SOME OF THEM FOR THE YEARBOOK.

OUR FIRST LAYOUT SESSION IS ON DECEMBER 11 (SATURDAY) IN THE MORNING. NO EXPERIENCE IS NEEDED -- ONLY INTEREST. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN COMING ON SATURDAY, CONTACT: Linda Glauser BII, OR Mary Peat BIV.

THE YEARBOOK IS PROGRESSING -- THANKS TO YOUR INTEREST AND SUPPORT.

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NOTICE:

Thanks to all the classes who have contributed money twoard the purchase of the new mimeograph machine. We have raised about $50.00 so far -- and that's a big help! Special thanks must go to the Public Health class, who really turned their purses inside out trying to help us.

## THROW IT IN THE RING

I decided, just after completing the last issue of the PULSE, that it would be really great if any member of the School of Nursing who had a beef or a praise for the University, the School, or anything else could let other people know about it -- with the intention that something could be done about the suggestion (or whatever) made. So, like a good editor, I asked around for opinions, suggestions, angnymous comments and the like, but got very few results. Like PULSE reps and a successor for PULSE editorialship next year, complaints, suggestions and even praise are difficult to come by.

Why?

I find it difficult to formulate one answer which conveniently generalizes the phenomena responsible for this lack of interest; however, I have come across a possible reason. Hopefully, it will stimulate all of your ingenious little minds into coming up with some of the real reasons.

With that, then; here is a sample COMPLAINT FORM for students... University style!

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THIS IS YOUR OFFICIAL

# COMPLAINT FORM

It has come to our attention that several students are dissatisfied with some of the programmes which are presently being encorporated in the curriculum of this institution. In order to have these criticisms heard, the University has established COMPLAINT FORMS for any person who can offer criticism -- whether it be positive or negative -- to the government of this institution.

USE YOUR COMPLAINT FORM CONSTRUCTIVELY!

If interested, PRINT LEGIBLY your criticism in the box provided below. If possible, also provide a true-life incident so that your complaint may be validated by the BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

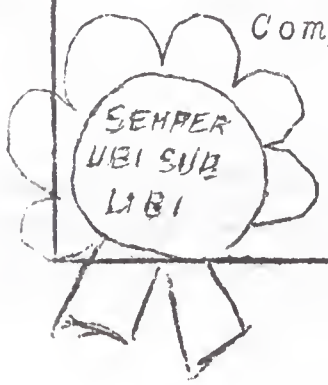
Thank you.

The University.

PRINT LEGIBLY PLEASE!!! (The juniorsecretary lost her glasses last week)

Complaints

Constructive Criticisms



WOULD YOU BELIEVE ...

SNEEZLES is even better this year because...

NURSES are going to take it off (!!!) for the show?

THERE'LL be lots of men to show your curly red hair to.

Besides, The "Body" says so!

Come to Sneezles - Dec. 3 & 4
8:00 PM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

HAVE YOU GOT YOURS???